

FAITH AND UNITY



THE JOURNAL OF THE COUNCIL FOR

THE DEFENCE OF CHURCH PRINCIPLES

in co-operation with the

JOINT COMMITTEE ON DOCTRINE OF

THE AMERICAN CHURCH UNION AND

THE CLERICAL UNION

No. 78. Vol. III. November 1952 Threepence

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

— The Archbishop of Canterbury, in his recent address to the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America at Boston, Massachusetts, has posed a question which needs our careful consideration. It is as follows:—

“The question which governs everything else is: does the Church Catholic include all baptized persons or groups of baptized persons or does it include only members of an episcopal church? If the latter, then no relation of intercommunion with non-episcopal bodies is tolerable, and all talk of reunion or intercommunion must be abandoned.

— But the tradition, the practice and the thought of most parts of the Anglican Communion accept all baptized persons as within the Catholic Church. . . . On that basis there is already and inevitably a relationship between all, and overpassing all divisions. . . .”

(The above is from a report in *The Times* of September 11.)

1. We should agree that it is Baptism which makes a member of Christ and thus a member of the Holy Catholic Church. But we must note that this would not be agreed to by most of those bodies which the Archbishop is considering. It is, in fact, high sacra-

mental teaching. It involves us logically in the *ex opere operato* doctrine. This is, of course, entirely consistent with the formularies of the Church of England. In Article xxvii we learn that "as by an instrument they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church"; and this is the same doctrine as the *ex opere operato*, in other words.

But after the Baptism, which is a birth and a beginning, there is the necessity to live our lives "according to this beginning". Except where a child dies before the age of discretion, he is bound by the terms of the baptismal covenant to proceed to Confirmation and to a life of Communion. The response in repentance and faith plainly includes the obligation to believe "all the articles of the Christian faith". Apart from this continuance in the baptized life, lived in the apostolic fellowship of the Church, it is unreal (and indeed it is treating Baptism as something perilously like magic) to argue that there is "already and inevitably a relationship between all, and overpassing all divisions".

We should certainly agree that every one who is baptized has but to begin at the point where he left off, and so fulfil his membership in the Church. But while he stops short or lapses, we cannot regard the Baptism as causing more than a potential relationship between those who once received it. To put it another way, there are two different kinds of lapsing after Baptism. One is the failure to fulfil our side of the New Covenant by living a Christian life. The other is possible to those who do live a Christian life morally, but who at the same time fail to fulfil the Baptism by receiving Confirmation and living a communicant life within the Church.

The first thing to beware of, then, in answering the question, is the segregation of Baptism from the other Sacraments and from the whole faith.

2. But there is more. A clause in parenthesis has been slipped in whose implications might easily escape the general reader. The words are (as quoted above) "all baptized persons *or groups of baptized persons*" (italics are mine).

The suggestion is that all who agree that members of the Church are made by Baptism, would agree equally that the bodies of Christians who use Baptism are themselves, *as such*, "inevitably and already" true parts of the Catholic Church. But this does not follow, and we must not allow that the one leads to the other. Groups, societies, organizations can exist—they exist within the Church of England as well as outside it—which have been formed by men, and are not dependent upon sacramental grace—that is to say, not in themselves, *as groups or organizations*. This would be true of C.M.S. or S.P.G.; and we can easily discover that it is true of Methodism if we consider its terms of membership. It is possible to be a member of a local

Methodist church while remaining unbaptized. The same is true of Congregational members.

3. Here we approach another matter of great importance; i.e. the existence of many Christian bodies which do not use Baptism at all. The Archbishop, in his longing for reunion, declares that the baptismal relationship overpasses all divisions. But it does not. This gives a false picture of the facts, and involves the overlooking of many who name the Name of Christ and believe in Him. We cannot describe Baptism as the one thing we all have in common.

Moreover, if (as we saw) those bodies and groups which use it teach no doctrine of regeneration, nothing which makes it "necessary to salvation", they, from their side, cannot, it is to be supposed, accept the doctrine which makes it so tremendous a bond. Baptists and Plymouth Brothers, who make it the outward witness of conversion, deny that an infant's "Christening" is Baptism at all. There is, indeed, a cleavage between all who believe in Baptismal Regeneration and those who do not. We ought to confess that, amongst ourselves, Baptism is the most gravely misused of all the Sacraments. Its import is little understood by the vast majority who bring infants to the Font; and this makes its use as a bond overpassing divisions the more fraught with danger. Nor may we forget or despise such societies and groups as the Quakers or the Salvation Army, who do not practise Baptism. It may be that they are right to see that it stands or falls with much else. And these people have a claim upon our prayer and work for union, as great as any others.

4. Years ago, Fr. Hébert warned us against putting episcopacy into an isolated position and leaving it high and dry. He asked "whether there is not a liability to an over-emphasis [on episcopacy] as though . . . validity of orders were the only thing needing serious consideration." To put it over against Baptism as though they could be separated is another example of the fatal division of sacraments the one from the other and from the whole life and faith of the Church. *Baptisma*, in its full, primitive sense, included Confirmation (or Chrismation as the East calls it); and whether this meant the presence of the Bishop, or the use of oil which he had blessed, it always involved the action of a Successor of the Apostles who completed and crowned the Baptism.

What then is to be done? We dare plead for a humble return (for purposes of discussing "church relations") to the place where all of us, in some degree, left the main road or stream in the life of the undivided Church. For purposes of reunion study, we have to turn back deliberately from our present condition, to the age before the schism between East and West; before the great heresies gained ground; before "the world got
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THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER

This Conference was held at Lund, the Swedish university town, from August 15-28, 1952, in succession to those of Lausanne in 1927 and Edinburgh in 1937. All Christian bodies who accepted Jesus Christ as God and Saviour were represented with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, which, however, for the first time sent four observers, who were greatly welcomed. The Orthodox were represented by Archbishop Athenagoras of Thyateira and one or two other bishops, as well as by the well-known Professors Florovsky and Zander, but by none from behind the iron curtain. One delegation from Greece was at the last moment unable to come. The Anglicans were a small minority as compared with the rest, but included two English diocesan bishops, those of Derby and Chelmsford, the Bishop of Brechin, three from the United States of America, including the Bishop of Washington, together with the Bishop of Barbados and Bishop de Mel from Ceylon, who preached at the opening service in the Cathedral.

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

The main subject discussed was the Nature of the Church, on which it was unanimously agreed that "the Church is not a

into the Church" because Christianity became the state religion. We have suffered from indiscriminate, and often enforced, Baptism; and from the gradual decline in the belief that Confirmation is essential. Vast numbers of unprepared heathen were absorbed into the Church by Baptism in the fourth century; and vast numbers who are without Christian belief are absorbed in this way still.

Another return in humility is of equal value; the return in reunion discussions to the one real bond of union between all those who believe in Christ Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Here is the only real starting-place; the only uniting power which does overpass divisions. In that deep devotion to the Crucified which those otherwise separated from us often possess, and from that alone, we may dare to explain ourselves to one another, and to seek for such visible unity as God wills. He will reveal the right paths in His own good time. Our starting-point must be nothing so unreal as the practice of Baptism, as it is at present. On the contrary, it will be healthy for us to learn that the question of Baptism divides us even more seriously than our differences about the Apostolic Ministry.

H. G. BLOMFIELD.

human contrivance, but God's gift for the salvation of the world ". It is described as " the newly-constituted People of God " and " the Body of Christ ". The Report continues, " Christ is the Head and He unites all believers in Himself. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the redeemed are united into a body, in the world but not of it, as a ' People of God's own Possession ' who share in the gifts of the one Spirit."

The idea of two churches, visible and invisible, was rejected. " We are agreed that there are not two Churches, one visible and the other invisible, but one Church which must find visible expression on earth " (Ch. III, para. 44). But difference of belief is recorded as to " whether certain doctrinal, sacramental, and ministerial forms are of the essence of the Church itself." The Report continues, " None of us looks forward to an institution with rigid uniformity of governmental structure and all of us look forward to a time when all Christians can have unrestricted communion in Sacrament and fellowship with each other " (a statement which may rule out Curialism, but certainly not universal episcopacy).—

It could hardly be expected that such a gathering would accept the Apostolic Succession. Yet the Report states that " a special significance is, however, attached by some Churches to the possession of the historic episcopate in apostolic succession. Some indeed possess and value this without attaching any necessary doctrinal significance to it. For others, however, all other means of continuity are here focused and they would regard common acceptance of a ministry in this succession as an essential step towards the unity of the Church and as the only sufficient safeguard of its historic continuity. The kind or degree of doctrinal interpretation implied in such an acceptance is still a matter of disagreement " (III. 14). (Some of the Anglicans in the sectional discussion insisted that the apostolate is part of our Lord's institution for the Church, and that this is continued only in the Episcopate.)

THE CREEDS

On the consensus in doctrine needed for outward unity there was an apparently retrograde step taken from the general acceptance of the Nicene Creed at Lausanne. For we find in the Report, " Most accept the Ecumenical Creeds as an interpretation of the truth of the Bible or as marking a distinctive stage in the working-out of the orthodox faith. Some assign a supreme importance to the credal documents of the early Ecumenical Councils. Some would say that to found unity on any creeds is to found it on something human, namely our understanding of the Gospel or our theological work in formulating its meaning " (III. 27).

WAYS OF WORSHIP

The two other subjects dealt with were Ways of Worship and Intercommunion. On the former it was agreed that "all worship is by and within the family of God's people alike in heaven and on earth. Even in private prayer the Christian is always praying with the Church as a member of the communion of saints". Differences of opinion, however, find frank expression, for instance on the ministry "to which alone the leadership of certain acts is restricted. . . . For some of us this restriction rests upon the belief that the Church by the guidance of the Holy Spirit calls some of its members to this or that function. For others it is based upon the belief that the Holy Spirit gives to some members of the Church the appropriate grace of holy orders. Again some Churches emphasize the ministerial priesthood as definitely distinct from the priesthood of all believers." With regard to the Eucharistic Sacrifice it is recorded that "some believe that they only offer a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and obedient service . . . others however . . . insist that in the Holy Eucharist the Lord Jesus Christ as our Great High Priest unites the oblation made by His Body, the Church, with His own Sacrifice, and takes up her own adoration into the *Sanctus* of the company of heaven." (Some of us, however, wished to clarify this by stating that as our Lord is now offering His eternal Sacrifice in heaven in His own Person, so on earth He offers it in the Eucharist through the ministry of His Church.)

INTERCOMMUNION

With regard to Intercommunion in the sense that communicants of each Church should be allowed to receive Communion in all the others, there was a majority in favour of this. The Report runs, "The majority of us . . . believe that there already exists among the members of the World Council of Churches such a fundamental unity as to justify, or indeed require, joint participation at the Lord's Table." This seems a regrettable departure from the formerly accepted policy of the movement. It was put on record, however, that "many Anglicans, in accordance with the statement of the Lambeth Conference of 1930, would hold that intercommunion should be the goal of, rather than a means to, the restoration of unity."

At the Conference itself ample provision was made for Anglicans, Orthodox, Old Catholics, and the Church of South India to celebrate the Eucharist according to their own rites. On the first Sunday, however, a great High Mass (and called by that name) was celebrated by the Swedish Church in the Cathedral, and the Swedish authorities (though apparently not the whole bench of bishops) issued an invitation to all members of the Conference to
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GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN CANADA

September, 1952

The following notes have been compiled from information received from a Canadian correspondent.

Shortly before the Synod met, the Commission on Union of the Central Council of the United Church of Canada (a union of Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists formed in 1925) published a Report proposing, amongst other things, the acceptance of confirmed communicants of the Church of England in Canada in good standing at the Lord's Table in the United Church, interchange of preachers, co-operation "in the development of Community Churches, possibly on the basis of double affiliation", and the extension "in every possible way" of co-operation in special services, "the observance of special occasions, and holiday arrangements". These are the United Church proposals referred to later in this report.

communicate. In view of this invitation some of the Anglicans felt that they could not receive Communion at this service, though feeling no difficulty about doing so at the ordinary celebrations of the Swedish liturgy. (For there seems no reason to doubt that the Apostolic Succession has been retained in Sweden, and Lambeth has recommended intercommunion with the Church of that country.) We attended this Mass, however, when the Cathedral was filled with some 1,700 people of whom more than 500 communicated. The fact that the Mass was sung by a priest in full vestments at the high altar, raised on twelve steps and adorned by crucifix and six lights, must have been an eye-opener to many brought up in strong Protestant traditions.

It is hardly my province, even if it were in my capacity, to speak of the results of the Conference. But I can testify that it is of the highest importance for Catholics (both Anglican and Orthodox) to take their part in the Faith and Order movement. First in order to save it from aiming at a Pan-Protestant front, which leaves Catholicism aside, even if it does not directly oppose it. At Lund Catholic speakers received the most courteous attention and were given every opportunity of expressing their views, and exercised an influence quite out of proportion to their numbers. Further it would be ungenerous not to add that we learnt, or ought to have learnt, much from our fellowship with Christians of very different traditions, but with intense devotion to our Lord and the spread of His Gospel.

H. EDWARD SYMONDS, C.R.

The keynote of the Primate's address to the General Synod was unity, but he thought that it should be sought in a "cautious but progressive way". Replying to the greetings of the United Church delegation, the Archbishop of Rupert's Land said, "Unity is not reached by agreement; agreement is reached by unity. When unity comes, our differences will disappear." And the Archbishop of Quebec, reporting on the meeting of the World Conference on Faith and Order at Lund (see page 124), said that he could see no progress in unity: everybody was pleasant, but differences of belief on fundamentals were still too great.

When the Synod reached the programme for Thursday, September 11, some of the exponents of union appear to have thought that the Synod might pass over the proposals of the Committee on Reunion without requiring that they be discussed. In the Lower House they brought in a special resolution guaranteeing "all possible aid and co-operation with the United Church in implementing union", and also promising "militant leadership in informing our people of the necessity for church union."

This resolution was passed by the Lower House, but did not receive the concurrence of the Upper House, as a joint session on the subject was still to come. Literature is to be published, but there is no evidence that this literature will be theological or that the "other side" will be able to publish literature at Synod's expense.

At the joint session the Rev. Dr. Scovil, Warden of St. Chad's College, Regina, said that the Diocese of Qu'Appelle could not accept the proposals of the United Church as published, particularly those for the exchange of pulpits and participation in United Church sacraments. The speeches on the other side showed no evidence of understanding the problem. When the Primate called for a vote on the Report of the Committee on Reunion, the result was so close that a count had to be made. The Synod decided to *receive* the Report, but *not* to adopt it.

If the Catholics in the Canadian Church can study the situation and be ready to meet with historical and theological exactitude the arguments of the other side, we may be able to recover our Anglican prestige. The Synod of 1952 has shown that Catholic opinion has grown, but key positions on the Committees are still in the hands of those who are beginning to accept some of the "liberal" teaching of the 1920's.

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